

REMARKS

Claims 14-19 have been examined. Claims 14 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and claims 14-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

I. Preliminary Matters

The Office Action Summary indicates that a PTO 1449 form is attached. However, a PTO 1449 form was not provided with the Office Action. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide an initialed PTO 1449 form for the March 19, 2002 Information Disclosure Statement.

The Examiner has objected claims 14 and 15 due to minor informalities. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claims 14 and 15, and submits that such amendments overcome the objection.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 14 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The Examiner maintains that the term “strip-like” renders the claim indefinite. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claims 14 and 15 to recite “strip-shaped” rather than “strip-like”. Such amendments are merely for clarification purposes, as requested by the Examiner, and do not narrow the scope of the claims.

In addition, the Examiner maintains that the phrase “where is nearer to a central portion thereof” is unclear. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claims 14 and 15 to clarify that the

“central portion” refers to the green sheet. Applicant submits that such amendments overcome the rejection, and are not made in view of any prior art.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Applicant submitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,644,107 to Kubota (“Kubota”).

Claims 14-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Kubota.

A. Claim 14

Applicant submits that claim 14 is patentable over the cited references. For example, claim 14 recites a green sheet in which through holes are opened in a vicinity of at least one end portion. A strip-shaped non-conductive region is formed on the green sheet in an area which is nearer to a center portion of the green sheet, than the through holes.

The Examiner acknowledges that the AAPA fails to disclose the claimed manufacturing process, but contends that Kubota does. In particular, the Examiner contends that laminate 11 of Kubota discloses the claimed strip-shaped non-conductive region. However, Kubota discloses that laminate 11 is formed by stacking a plurality of insulating sheets with interposition of internal circuit elements (Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 24-27). As shown in Fig. 1, the laminate 11 comprises an area which is provided with external electrodes 12 formed in via holes (col. 5, lines 27-36). Therefore, laminate 11 fails to teach or disclose a strip-shaped non-conductive region formed on a green sheet in an area which is nearer to a center portion of the green sheet, than the

through holes, since laminate 11 appears to actually contact the via holes. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the Examiner is misinterpreting and/or misapplying the cited reference.

Kubota also discloses grooves 20 formed in the mother laminate 14 (Fig. 3; col. 6, line 25). Applicant submits that grooves 20 fail to teach or disclose the claimed strip-shaped non-conductive region. For example, grooves 20 are formed along cutting lines 15 (Fig. 2), so that via holes 19 are parted and inner surfaces of the via holes 19 are exposed (col. 6, lines 25-30). Therefore, rather than forming grooves 20 nearer to a center of mother insulating sheets 16 or 17, than the via holes 19, Kubota appears to form grooves 20 directly through via holes 19.

Accordingly, since the combination of the AAPA and Kubota fails to teach or suggest the manufacturing method of claim 14, Applicant submits that such claim is patentable.

B. Claim 15

Since claim 15 contains features which are similar to the features recited in claim 14, Applicant submits that claim 15 is patentable over the cited references for reasons that are similar to the reasons presented above.

C. Claims 16 and 18

Since claims 16 and 18 are dependent upon claim 14, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 09/894,121

D. Claims 17 and 19

Since claims 17 and 19 are dependent upon claim 15, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Newly added claims

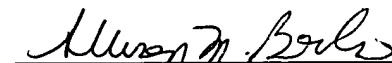
Applicant has added claims 21-31 to provide more varied protection for the present invention.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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